

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 and 28-33 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. Claims 1, 6-11, 15-20, 28-30, 32 and 33 have been amended as shown at pages 2-7 of the Reply.

Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments herein.

I. Rejection of Claims 1-14, 21, 22, and 28 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-14, 21, 22, and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Release 8.0 of the Workflow Template software product publicly available from Template Software, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as Template) in view of “XML based Process Management Standard launched by Workflow management Coalition – Wf-XNL” (hereinafter referred to as WFXML-99). This rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons. The Template and WFXML-99 documents, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every limitation recited in the subject claims.

To reject claims in an application under §103, an examiner must establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. A *prima facie* case of obviousness is established by a showing of three basic criteria. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. See MPEP §706.02(j). The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art and not based on applicant's disclosure. See *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Applicants' claimed subject matter relates to a system and method for modeling business workflow processes and reducing the processes to a useful programming language for use in real world applications. To this end, independent claim 1 recites: *dividing the reduced business process into at least one independent transaction and at*

*least one parent transaction, the at least one independent transaction is not interdependent with the at least one parent transaction, the at least one parent transaction has two or more child interdependent transactions that are each different from each other and interdependent with each other, **each child transaction receiving data that is at least partially different from data received by the other child transactions**, the child transactions are children of the parent transaction.* Template and WFXML-99, either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest these exemplary features of applicants' claimed subject matter.

Template discloses a Workflow Design Editor (WDE) that enables one to design a workflow system at a high level. In particular, the Examiner contends that Template provides a copy flow facility that divides a reduced business process into at least one independent transaction and at least one parent interdependent transaction. While the copy flow facility appears to provide for dividing a reduced business process into transactions, it is submitted that the cited document, and specifically, the copy flow facility, does not teach or suggest dividing the reduced business process into one or more different interdependent transactions as recited in the subject claims. Rather the cited document specifically states "[a] copy flow is a single flow that splits into two or more flows. ... An exact copy of the work item or work item set is sent to each destination task." (See page 3-20). The facility is incapable of dividing the parent transaction into one or more different child interdependent transactions each receiving different data. As evidenced by the above cited passage, the cited art sends the same data to each child interdependent transaction. Template is silent regarding divided transactions that are not identical. The claimed subject matter in contrast is capable of dividing a reduced business transaction into a plurality of independent transactions and one or more parent transactions wherein the one or more parent transactions can comprise a plurality of differing child interdependent transactions that each receives data that is different from data received by the each of the other child interdependent transactions.

In addition, independent claim 1 recites *executing the child interdependent transactions independently from each other, **the at least one parent interdependent transaction commits when a last child interdependent transaction commits***. The cited art discloses two flows coming out of a junction box, but fails to disclose when a commit

would occur and specifically fails to disclose that a parent transaction that would consist of the two flows would commit once the last of the two flows commits. In fact, Workflow Template is silent regarding committing transactions.

Independent claim 7 (and similarly independent claim 28) recites *autonomous business operations are not dependent on each other for completion and are concurrent with respect to each other, the interdependent business operations are dependent on each other for completion and are concurrent with respect to each other, **the interdependent business operations being non-identical and each receiving data that is at least partially different from each other.*** This feature is similar to the limitation, *child interdependent transactions that are each different from each other and interdependent with each other, **each child transaction receiving data that is at least partially different from data received by the other child transactions,*** of independent claim 1. For the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, Template also fails to teach or suggest this novel feature of independent claims 7 and 28.

Furthermore, independent claim 7 (and similarly independent claim 28) recites *autonomous business operations are not dependent on each other for completion and are **concurrent with respect to each other,** the interdependent business operations are dependent on each other for completion and are **concurrent with respect to each other.*** The cited reference provides no indication that the flows to or from a junction box are performed concurrently. The section of the reference cited merely indicates that the multiple flows are part of a work set. Contrary to assertions in the Office Action, Template is silent regarding concurrent operation. Applicants' representative would appreciate Examiner's specific citation of this feature in the cited reference.

Dependent claim 2 recites ***the one or more actions are concurrently executed independently from each other.*** As discussed above with respect to independent claims 7 and 28, Template is silent regarding concurrent executed actions.

Moreover the Examiner offers WFXML-99 to make up for the acknowledged deficiency that Template does not teach or suggest reducing a business process to XML code of a scheduling programming language. However, WFXML-99 does not cure the elucidated deficiency with respect to Template in regards to independent claims 1, 7 and 28 as discussed above concerning the novel feature, *child interdependent transactions*

that are each different from each other and interdependent with each other, each child transaction receiving data that is at least partially different from data received by the other child transactions. WFXML-99 provides a draft specification relating to the provision of XML-based exchanges between workflow systems. The cited reference is silent regarding *child interdependent transactions that are each different from each other and interdependent with each other, each child transaction receiving data that is at least partially different from data received by the other child transactions.*

In view of at least the foregoing, applicant's representative respectfully submits that Template and WFXML-99, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all limitations of applicant's invention as recited in independent claims 1, 7 and 28 (and claims 1-6, 8-14, 21 and 22 that respectfully depend there from), and thus fails to make obvious the subject claimed invention. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

II. Rejection of Claims 15-20 and 29-33 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 15-20 and 29-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Template in view of WFXML-99, as applied to claims 1 and 12 above, and further in view of Chen *et al.* US 5,940,839. This rejection should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons. Claims 15-20 and 29-33 depend from independent claims 7 and 28 respectively, and Chen *et al.* does not remedy the aforementioned deficiencies with respect to the Template and WFXML-99 and the respective independent claims. Chen *et al.* relates to systems and methods for recovering from failures in transactions in nested transactional structures. The cited document, however does not teach or suggest child interdependent transactions that are each different from each other and interdependent with each other, wherein each child transaction receives data that is at least partially different from data received by the other child transactions, or that the parent transaction commits when a last child interdependent transaction commits. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments and amendments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063 [MSFTP101US].

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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